

My Favorite Fifty Haiku, by L.A. Davidson, edited by Laura Tanna (No place [Miami, Fl.]: DLT Associates, Inc., 2017) 43 pages; 5½" x 8½". Glossy four-color card covers; saddle-stapled. ISBN: 978-0-9674991-1-6. Price: inquire of lauratanna@aol.com

Reviewed by Deborah P Kolodji

Before her death in 2007, L.A. Davidson reviewed all of the haiku she had published in her forty-year career and sent them to Charles Trumbull for his haiku database. Trumbull asked her to indicate her favorite haiku, so when the estate of L.A. Davidson decided to publish a book to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of her birthday on July 31, 1917, the haiku she selected as her favorites were the ones included in this book.

In addition to Davidson's favorite 50 haiku, this book includes a biography written by her daughter, Laura Tanna, as well as a reference guide which lists each of the haiku included, identifying both when and where it was first published as well as when/where the haiku was written/observed. It also includes documentation regarding how to access her papers (39 cartons of books, periodicals, notes, and correspondence) at the library at Columbia University.

It is difficult to review the work of a haiku legend. L.A. Davidson, in addition to being published widely, was a charter member of the Haiku Society of America, where she served in various offices such as vice president in 1976 and as secretary in 1979, and from 1981-1982. So, instead of critiquing her poems, I'd like to discuss the layout and presentation of the book itself.

Her daughter's biography at the beginning helps familiarize anyone who entered the haiku world in the last decade since her passing, with Davidson. This brilliantly sets the context for the selection of haiku. We are told that Davidson was born in Eastern Montana in sight of the Judith Mountains, so when we read:

somewhere long ago
 this black hawk in a bare tree,
 the snow deep below

we hear echoes of Bashō's autumn crow on a bare branch, but we also see the bare tree in an Eastern Montana winter landscape. Likewise, knowing that she and her husband Kirby lived in Kampala, Uganda while he was a Visiting Professor at Makerere University, we aren't surprised to encounter a cheetah:

hunched in the grass
 the cheetah eyes us sideways
 tearing at red flesh

After Uganda, the family moved to Greenwich Village in New York, but kept a boat in Connecticut where they sailed in Long Island Sound on weekends, which inspired my favorite part of the book, the grouping of ocean/beach-themed haiku in the center.

on shore alone	with her tongue
as the ebbing tide	tasting the salt spray
takes the moon with it	on his lips

where sea and sky meet
 only hazy fishing boats
 dividing the gray

My personal muse is often inspired by the ocean (the Pacific Ocean in my case), so haiku by the beach always particularly resonate with me. In addition, the color photos in the book I find the most stunning are the ocean scenes captured so beautifully by Kirby, especially the ones which touch my heart as "sunset" photos, even though I know intellectually the shots must be of sunrise over the water since it is the Atlantic Ocean. The availability of these photos, in many cases taken in the same place and

time by Kirby as the haiku Davidson was writing, also helps provide a window into the world L.A. Davidson lived in, the world which inspired her poetry.

Over the span of the forty years L.A. Davidson was writing haiku, conventions changed slightly and you can observe it here. For example, all of the haiku which start with a capitalized first word were written in the 1960's and early 1970's. The two two-liner haiku in the book were both published in 1984. That said, her most famous haiku, the one selected as the final haiku in the book has a modern feel to it, but was written in 1971 and first published in 1972:

beyond
stars beyond
star

I can only say that L.A. Davidson was an English language haiku pioneer and the haiku community benefited greatly from her time with us here. This book belongs in the personal library of all serious haiku poets.

In Silence 静けさに W Ciszy – haiga, by Lidia Rozmus. With Iwona Biederman, Masanobu Hoshikawa, and Jan Zamorski. (Sante Fe, N.M.: Deep North Press, 2017). 9" x 12". Handmade box with portfolio. Limited edition of 90. The DVD *In Silence* is attached to the book. ISBN 978-1-929116-23-2. Price: \$120.00 from rozmuslidia@gmail.com

Reviewed by Michele Root-Bernstein

The poet E. E. Cummings once asked himself why he also painted. “For exactly the same reason I breathe,” he answered—or rather, as he put it, didn’t answer. All he could really say was that both were essential, the painting no less than the poetry, for “they love each other dearly”